

CHRISTIAN TELESCOPE.

VOL. 1.

"YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—JESUS CHRIST.

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CHRISTIAN TELESCOPE.

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ILLUSTRATION.

Agreeably to our promise in the 5th number of the TELESCOPE, page 17th, we shall now offer a brief illustration of one of the passages which Mr. Crossman proposed for the meditation of his hearers, at the period of his formal renunciation of Universalism.

The passage is found in St. Matt. xiii. 49, 50. But in order to have a right understanding of the subject, it is necessary to commence the paragraph, which begins with the 47th verse. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

That this is a parable, will be admitted by all: since no professor of christianity will for a moment allow that the spiritual, unfading kingdom of heavenly glory in a future state, will be filled with characters that are good and bad; or that its inhabitants will some of them be righteous, and some of them be wicked. What the kingdom here spoken of is, constitutes the first inquiry which belongs to our subject.

The language of our Saviour is so plain upon this particular that we think it ought to remove all rational doubt. "The kingdom of heaven," saith he, "is preached, and every man presseth into it." Here we are instructed that the *kingdom of heaven* was simply that which was *preached*: and if we are correctly informed of what was preached, we have an explanation of what this kingdom is. That it was the gospel, or covenant of divine mercy and grace, which was preached by Christ and his apostles, is a truth so plainly taught in the New-Testament, that it needs no argument for its support. To place the fact beyond all doubt that the *kingdom* which we are considering, is the gospel covenant, we again refer to the Saviour's testimony. "If I cast out devils by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." To the Jews he said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." It would be difficult to mistake the meaning of these texts; and we are persuaded that christians in general, have understood by this language, that the gospel had been brought to the Jews, by Christ and his apostles, and that in consequence of their rejecting it, this gospel with its privileges was to be taken from them, and given to the Gentiles.

The Gospel which is represented by a net, is said to gather of every kind, *both good and bad*. And it is perfectly obvious, that the liberal invitations and promises of the gospel aroused multitudes from their stupor, and that many professed a belief in the same, who, when the days of persecution and trouble arose, were necessarily set aside by the apostles and ministering disciples, as unworthy the christian name, because they were, evidently, to use St. Paul's language, "the enemies of the gospel of Christ." This fact well answers to the angels *severing the wicked from among the just*: for the term *angel* signifies a messenger. The outer darkness which is spoken of as the portion of their condemnation, was doubtless that spiritual blindness, which "happened to Israel till the fulness of the gentiles be come in." The miseries which were inseparably connected with their delusion and error, were set forth in the strong metaphorical language of the text, "wailing and gnashing of teeth." Alluding, unquestionably, to the great calamities that were shortly to fall in common, upon the unbelieving nation of the Jews. For an account of that calamity, see Matt. xxiv. chap. and Josephus' history of the destruction of Jerusalem.

But the reader will perhaps say, this important event was to transpire at the *end of the world*, and therefore is still future. We answer; the word here rendered *world*, is *aionos*, which properly signifies the *age*; and is so translated in the IMPROVED VERSION, and is rendered by a late eminent Greek scholar, (Hon. Charles Thomson) of *this age*. There can be little doubt that its meaning as here used, is the end of the Jewish polity, which closed the *legal* rights of that dispensation, which consisted of types and shadows, prefiguring the divine realities of the NEW and better COVENANT.

To evince that this explanation is not a far-fetched and forced conclusion, we refer the reader to the words of St. Paul. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. x. 11. "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. ix. 26.

As the *ends of the world* here spoken of, could not be the end of the terraqueous globe, or the dissolution of the universe, which came on the disciples, it must of necessity refer to the conclusion of the legal dispensation. In the end of this dispensation, Christ offered himself a sacrifice, once for all.

The proof already introduced, is sufficient for our present purpose, and shows that the passage under consideration, so far from supporting the doctrine of endless misery, does not even refer to a future state of existence.

How perfectly idle it must appear to the reflecting mind, when such passages are quoted to support the doctrine of endless misery—passages that neither express or imply a state beyond the present life of man

on earth. Those who quote them for this purpose, must calculate largely upon the *implicit credence* of their readers, and at the same time place undue reliance upon the force of tradition.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN TELESCOPE.

REV. MR. PICKERING,

Sir—Observing a piece in the first number of the Telescope, signed POLEMIKOS, in which the author uses strong and cogent reasons against the doctrine that you advocate, has induced me to offer a few reasons, which appear to me to be irreconcilable with that doctrine, which teaches us there are no rewards or punishments in a future or eternal state of existence.

There are two kinds of Universalists, one of which believe in rewards and punishments in the invisible world, and the others believe that all rewards and punishments are in this world, and that salvation, or an emancipation from sin and misery, is by free and unmerited grace. Which of these principles you contend for, I know not; but it is the latter that I shall direct my reasons against.

I am aware that there are some christians who contend that it is sinful to exercise our reason in regard to matters of religion; the substance of which is, that we are justifiable in exercising our reason as far as it comports with their belief; but the moment that we overleap the bounds of their belief, it becomes carnal reasoning. But I cannot believe that *Deity*, in bestowing this, the greatest of all gifts, and which in fact distinguishes us from the brute creation, ever bestowed this gift with free liberty of exercising it in all matters, excepting the most important one. The Universalists, as far as I am acquainted with their belief, renounce every sentiment that is not compatible with reason: In this sentiment, I cordially agree with them. They further believe that God is an impartial being; and to this also I will cheerfully subscribe, but not in the way in which they contend for it. They often advert to the rain and sunshine, (being blessings in common to all) to prove the impartiality of the *Deity*: but on taking a retrospective view of things in time, and then admitting that the whole family of man will, after the dissolution of the body, be raised to a state of eternal happiness, is, it appears to me, making the *Deity* a partial being. Under this impression, I shall proceed to state my objections to that doctrine which inculcates the belief that there is no future punishment. I shall produce my objections from reason alone; and as truth is my object, will thank you to give a fair and candid answer. Without investigating the characters of nations, or going minutely into the characters of individuals, shall only notice some of the most prominent characters of men: And first of all, I will notice those, the most depraved of all human beings,—I mean the pirates, who violate all the laws of God and man, and who of late have become so numerous as

to strike a terror on every reflecting mind : for scarcely a week rolls away that our papers do not record some act of *piracy* and *murder*. The greater part, if not all of this class of beings, have (no doubt) indulged in all kinds of wickedness from their youth.— They have not only repeatedly robbed the honest, hardy, and industrious mariners of their scanty and hard earnings, for which they have buffeted storms and gales, heats and colds, and exposed themselves to the most unhealthy climes, all of which, in most instances, they cheerfully combat, for the support of an aged parent or an affectionate wife and dear children, but have frequently put those honest and useful men to the most excruciating torture ; and in many instances have not spared innocent women and their tender offspring ! Now take a man of this character, and one who perhaps has lost his own life, while in the act of taking the life of an honest, unoffending man ; contrast the two characters, and then say, whether reason dictates to us that such a man is to receive no punishment in a future state, or whether they are both to fare alike in regard to happiness or misery ; both as regards degree and duration.— Again ; take the man who has a large, and perhaps an ill-gotten property, whose eyes are standing out with fatness, who has been wallowing in luxury all his days, and who perhaps through a protracted life, instead of ever having performed one disinterested act of charity, has been a constant oppressor of the poor, and has frequently withheld from them their just due. Take also the miser, whose money is his god, his idol, and which alone he worships, whose sordid appetite has bound his purse with adamant chains, insomuch that never a cent escaped to soothe the sorrows of the widow's or orphan's heart. Now, contrast these two characters, with the poor, but meek and humble man, who, in consequence of his poverty, suffers many privations, and is often destitute of the comforts and necessities of life ; but who is an humble follower of his Lord and Master, doing all the good that his circumscribed abilities will admit ; and then say, whether reason dictates to us, that the state of these two characters will be the same in the eternal world ? and if so, does it not prove that DEITY is partial in regard to things in time ? and if so, may we not from the same parity of reasoning, conclude that he will be equally partial in regard to blessings in the eternal world ? A contrast might be drawn between many other characters, but the above will suffice ; and if you can prove from reason that the several characters alluded to, will all fare alike in the eternal world, it will of course apply to every character that can be exhibited.

ZENITH.

REPLY TO "ZENITH."

That there are different opinions entertained by the believers of universal salvation respecting the immediate destiny of intelligent beings in a future state, is a truth of publick notoriety : and it demonstrates the fact, that instead of receiving, implicitly, the sentiments and opinions of those who have gone before them, they are disposed to examine the scriptures for themselves, and believe according to the evidence which they there find.

Differences of opinion which result from a sober and careful investigation of the scriptures, are seldom so great as those which are blindly received by tradition. And besides this, those who investigate the scriptures for themselves, with prayerful attention, generally entertain *less rancour* and *more charity*, inasmuch as they have the example of their great Master constantly before them. They are taught by the lively oracles which they consult, "to have compassion on those who are ignorant and out of the way." From thence, also, they learn the lesson of their own frailty, and are instructed to make a generous allowance for the imbecility and circumscription of human intellect. But those who blindly prostrate themselves before the shrine of orthodoxy, and neglect to compare the sentiments in which they have been early instructed with the scriptures of truth, find very little room for the exercise of forbearance and charity ; and of such, it may in truth be said, that the *flame* of their zeal has often shone with the greatest brilliance at the *stake* of their victim !

As to what ZENITH has said of the *cogent reasons* of POLEMIKOS, we simply observe, that we consider the objections of that correspondent fairly met, and the public are left to judge for themselves. We appreciate the talents of POLEMIKOS, and hope to hear from him again in due time.

ZENITH professes to take reason for his guide, from which we infer that he expects to have his objections met on the ground of reason. We have no objections to this method, being persuaded that scripture and reason are in perfect harmony.

He adverts to the *rain and sunshine*, as a standing evidence adduced by the universalists in support of the divine impartiality ; and then suggests that the future resurrection of the whole human family to a state of *eternal happiness*, would in his opinion, be making the Deity a *partial Being*.

This appears to us, a very illogical conclusion, for the following reasons—: 1. The *rain and sunshine* are blessings which never have been, nor can they ever be merited by human actions. Therefore, to bestow these blessings upon a part of mankind only, would be an incontrovertible evidence of partiality in the character of their Creator. 2. The blessings of a resurrection state, are infinitely above the merit of our virtues, and therefore, can never be bestowed in consequence of any obedience rendered by the creature, to his Creator. What is purely the gift of God, and the gift by grace, should by no means be claimed as a reward of human merit. Now, in case no man can merit the sublimest of all blessings (*immortality and eternal life*) in the resurrection ; that it is the gracious bestowment of infinite goodness ; would not the universal administration of that gift be an irrefragable evidence that the Deity is *impartial* ? and would not the withholding of that blessing from a *part* of mankind prove that God is *partial* in goodness, since it is infinitely above the merit of any being ? If our correspondent desires it, he may find the clearest evidence of the universality of the resurrection to glory and immortality, in 1 Cor. xv.

We are aware that our friend ZENITH has associated two subjects, which do not necessarily belong to his argument in favour of future punishment : and as lib-

erality is a characteristic which we intend to maintain, we are disposed to point out the line of distinction. The resurrection to immortality is no where spoken of in the scriptures as a simultaneous event with the dissolution of organic nature. There may be, and doubtless is an intermediate state between the dissolution of the body, and the resurrection to which we allude. Therefore, the fact, that all the human race shall be raised to a state of glory and immortality, neither proves or disproves the doctrine of punishment after this life. This must stand or fall upon an entire different principle.

Experience, as well as the scriptures of inspiration, teach us that "in keeping the commands there is great reward." David saith, "Thou hast rewarded me according to the cleanness of my hands." Solomon saith, "the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner." that "the way of transgressors is hard—and Isa. lvii. 20, 21, there is no peace to the wicked—they are like the troubled sea, when its waters cannot rest." All these declarations are amply corroborated by the testimony of experience. But let us reason upon this subject :

Are we furnished with any evidence from reason or scripture, that men will be the servants of corruption, or sin in a future state ? No such evidence can be obtained. Again ; does God punish the sinner because he delights in misery ? No christian will admit this : Then why are sinners punished at all ? Answer ; because chastisement is graciously designed by the Deity to benefit the offender : for, saith the apostle, "no chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, it afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." In a word ; it is obvious that two, and only two objects are had in view in the punishment of sinners ; namely, the emendation of the sufferer, and an example to prevent the frequency of crime in others.

Now if sin be not a characteristic of a future state, (and we have no evidence that it is) the introduction of positive punishment would be totally useless in that state, both as an example to others, and as a mean of reforming the sufferer himself ; and therefore is inadmissible, being a characteristic of revenge or retaliation, which is contrary to the principles of the divine government. We therefore infer that the *positive* rewards of virtue, and the punishments of vice, are allotted to the experience of this life. The reader will probably say, if this be admitted, the happiness of all men will be equal at death : but this conclusion by no means follows. There may, and probably will be a great disproportion in the measure of enjoyment, during the intermediate period between the dissolution of the body, and the resurrection to immortality. If the apostle's reasoning (in Heb. xi. chap.) upon the state of those ancient worthies, who had died before his time, be correct, we have authority for the conclusion that even the most virtuous of the human race are not yet raised to a state of the highest perfection of which their natures are susceptible ; for of them, he saith : "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise : God having provided some bet-

ter thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." This apostle's reasoning elsewhere, is in confirmation of the same fact. "Ye know that the head of every man is Christ. He is the head and the first-born of every creature." If Christ be the head of every man, then every man is a member of his body; though not yet redeemed from corruption, and united to their head. Hence saith the apostle, "The whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now: and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Rom. viii. chap. Let it be remembered that the apostle had already asserted that he and his brethren in the faith had "received the spirit of adoption;" and were consequently redeemed from vain conversation and the service of sin: and yet he associates his own, and the happiness of his brethren with the adoption, redemption, or deliverance of the *whole body*,—the whole creation. Beings whose spiritual welfare and interest is thus connected, cannot enjoy the highest possible bliss, until all are delivered from sin and wretchedness, and are made recipients of the same grace.

Having shown that the perfect happiness of the whole, is inseparably connected with the wellbeing of each individual, the conclusion appears perfectly reasonable, that there will be different degrees of enjoyment until the resurrection, according to the moral condition of the subjects when they leave this mode of being. So that the two characters which ZENITH introduces, may experience as great a disproportion in the sum of their moral enjoyment in the intermediate state, as their characters were dissimilar in the present life. For the quantum of moral enjoyment to every man, must, according to the rules of perfect equity, be graduated according to the moral condition of the subject, which denotes his capacity to receive: For the favours of divine life are not bestowed upon the creature as the reward of his merits, but are administered purely upon the principles of free and equal grace. For aught we know, the intermediate state may be a state of constant progression in divine knowledge and enjoyment; but the consummation of human bliss must be reserved to the resplendent morn of the resurrection, when the sacred annunciation of truth shall be realized by the whole creation;—"as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

MORALIST, NO. 2.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN TELESCOPE.

"Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." PSALMS XXXVII. 37.

The path of virtue is never trodden in vain. The man who pursues it with undeviating and inflexible progress, is never wearied or disconsolate. He finds nothing too difficult to be surmounted, or too obdurate to be overcome. No fears corrode his bosom: no doubts perplex his mind. His soul, fixed upon heaven, is drawn out in devout aspiration, to the Father of spirits, in whom all his hopes and desires are centred, and in whose justice and immutable

goodness, his whole confidence and faith is rested.—When we consider the importance of morality and devotion, and realize that without their possession, we are exposed to all the vices which are predominant in the system of nature, and every moment liable to abandon ourselves to every thing flagitious and immoral, we discover with greater perspicuity, the happiness and delight, which those experience, who follow the paths of virtue and moral rectitude, and practice all the duties they owe to God, and to their fellow-creatures. Although it cannot with propriety be affirmed that man can render himself positively and essentially perfect; yet, it is certain he may become so amiable in the exercise of moral and devotional duties, and so perfect and upright in the practice of holiness, as to raise himself above the gratification of a sensual appetite, and consequently to screen him from all the miseries, which are the result of a wicked and sinful career. He who devotes his life to contemplation and prayerful meditation, exonerates himself of the compunctions of a guilty conscience, and enjoys more real happiness and refined pleasure, than can possibly be realized, in the unrestrained indulgence of vicious propensities, or in the satiety of immoral desires. There is nothing of so much importance, as regards our present and future wellbeing, and so eminently deserving our earnest and early attention, as the unspeakable acquisition of an acquaintance with our Creator. Without a knowledge of the Fountain of life and immortality, there is no real or permanent happiness. The soul, before it has been introduced to an acquaintance, and has participated the sweets of devotion and sacred communion with its origin, the God of all peace and consolation, is a stranger to its own sympathies and refined qualities. But when the Sun of righteousness, with his illuminating powers, sheds abroad in the heart a cognition of the divine perfection, the soul of man becomes the tenacious receptacle of heavenly and sublime sentiments, and pours forth its devout and humble aspirations to that beneficent and impartial being, who "openeth his hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing."

When a saving knowledge of the Parent of existence is effectually communicated to the children of imperfection, they are led to the altar of devotion, and are made the happy recipients of divine peace and consolation, flowing in rivers of unbounded grace, from the eternal source of purity and love! But while the perfect and upright are crowned with peace and comfort, as the fruit of their moral excellence and adhesion to the sacred rule of duty, the imperfect and unjust, in their perpetual wandering from *virtue*, that "straight and narrow path which leadeth unto life," plunge themselves in thoughtless unconcern, deep in the labyrinth of guilt and despair, and find by sad experience, that the "end of those things is death." "For the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." While, therefore, the end of the righteous is peace and enjoyment; the end of the unrighteous is confusion and despair: "There is no peace to the wicked; saith my God." Reader, whoever thou art, and in whatever station thou art placed; whether thou art applauded by the great, or whether thou art

derided by the multitude; whether thou art an Universalist, or a Calvinist; a Christian, or a sceptick; be not unmindful of this mild admonition: "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." Mark him as the heir of heaven's ETERNAL KING, and joint heir with the supernal Prince of life; as the friend of God, and as the zealous promoter of happiness to the vast fraternity of man—mark him adorned with every christian virtue; robed in the spotless garments of regeneration, with a pure conscience before God, and before his fellow-creatures: "patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;" with an inflexible determination to "overcome evil with good!" and behold him, but to follow the luminous example of his virtues.

POETRY.

DIVINE LOVE.

I sing of love, whose all-pervading pow'r
Made heav'n and earth, and painted ev'ry flow'r;
Which station'd suns and systems far away,
And pour'd effulgence on the rising day.

Primeval light, from thy divine abode,
Shot through the gloomy vale, where darkness rode
In her triumphal car; nor tongue could raise
One joyful pæan to thy worthy praise.

Hail matchless love! that mov'd the wheel of time,
Bade nature rise from chaos, in her prime;
Which cloth'd the grass, and ev'ry form design'd,
And fraught with nobler pow'rs the human mind.

Through worlds afar thy energies combine,
Wakes seraph harps to raptures all divine;
Descends to worlds below, and there inspires
Thy noblest works with young devotion's fires.

We bow to thee, and in thy pow'r behold
Immortal rest and sparkling crowns of gold:
The shining ranks above have caught thy flame,
And raise unbounded honours to thy name.

The whole creation shall thy laws obey,
All bend the knee and own thy sovereign sway:
Life, light, and peace, through all thy works shall
—reign,
And boundless praise thy matchless grace proclaim.

D.

SELECTIONS.

PERSECUTION.

There are but two ways of propagating religion, namely, miracles and exhortation. The one depends upon divine power, and the other upon the strength of reason. Where the finger of God appears, all further testimony is needless; and where the truth is obvious to reason, miracles are needless. God never wills us to believe that which is above our reason, but he at the same time commands our faith by miracles. He does not leave necessary things doubtful; and for this reason alone it is, that men are said to be left without excuse.

Every point of belief therefore must be supported either by reason or miracle, or else it is no point of be-

lief at all. Both the Jewish and the christian law were delivered and enforced with manifest signs and demonstrations of God's extraordinary presence and power. And it has been very justly boasted of the christian religion in particular, that it spread and prospered by miracles, persuasion, and clemency, in opposition to violence and cruelty.

But when christianity became tainted and defaced by priestcraft, it grew necessary to have many points believed, which contradicted both revelation and common sense: Therefore its foster fathers, who to the worship of God, added the worship of themselves, had no other way to prove their system but by wrath and vengeance. Reason was against them, and miracles not for them; so their whole dominion stood upon falsehood, guarded by force. This force, when it is exercised upon a religious account, is called persecution; which is what I am now to consider and expose.

To punish men for opinions that are even plainly false and absurd, is barbarous and unreasonable. We possess different minds, as we do different bodies; and the same proposition carries not the same evidence to every man alike, no more than the same object appears equally clear to every eye. A choleric temper, when it is not corrected with reason, and seasoned with humanity, is naturally zealous. A phlegmatick temper, on the other side, as it is naturally slow, so is it lukewarm and indifferent. Is there any merit in having a warm complexion, or any sin in being dull?

But further; to punish a man for not seeing the truth, or for not embracing it, is in the first place, to make him miserable, because he is already so; and in the second place, to pluck vengeance out of God's hands, to whom alone it belongs, if we will take his word for it. If this severity is pretended to be for his good, I would ask, is manifest cruelty any token of kindness, or was it ever taken for such? Does it not always increase the evil which it is employed to cure? Is destruction the means to happiness? Absurd and terrible!

But what, if, after all, the person persecuted should be found adherent to truth and honesty, and his enemies should prove their enemies? Would not this be adding cruelty to falsehood, and heaping up guilt with both hands? This indeed is often the case. And where it is not altogether so, the persecutors are still inexcusable. He who, in the search of truth, does all that he can, does as much as he ought. God requires no more; and what man dares do it, who fears him? When he acquits, who is it that condemns?

Besides, he that suffers, or at least dies, for religion, gives a testimony by so doing, that his conscience is dearer to him than ease or interest: Whereas the patrons of persecution have manifestly personal motives and self ends in it. It gratifies their pride, awes mankind, and brings them obedience and gain.

Our blessed Saviour, who had no view but the redemption of the world, never used his power, or the least force to subdue his enemies, though he knew their hearts to be malicious and implacable. He neither delivered them to death nor the devil, even for their hellish designs to kill him; much less

for points of error or speculation. He reasoned with all men but punished none. He used arguments, he worked wonders; but severities he neither practised nor recommended. His was a different spirit. He rebuked his apostles with sharpness, when, being yet full of the spirit of this world, and void of the spirit of God, they were for bringing down fire from heaven upon the heretical Samaritans. The merciful Jesus would not hurt these half heathens, though they rejected him in person, for he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them: And they who take another method give the lie to the Lord of life, and disown him for their head.

His apostles, as soon as they had received the Holy Ghost, grew wiser and more merciful. They shewed by miracles, that they were endowed with the divine power, but they never used either to compel or to burn, though they were beset with false teachers, and opposed by gainsayers. They were so far from giving ill-usage, that they never returned it. The exercise of wholesome severities was no part of their doctrine. Prayers and persuasions were their only arms, and such as became the gospel of peace.

This was the mild and heavenly behaviour of Christ and his apostles towards those who did not believe, or believed wrong; and it was followed by all their successors who aimed at the good of souls; but those who used the sacred function, as a ladder to power and gain, made a new gospel of their own decisions, and forced it upon the world, partly by fighting and partly by cursing. The apostles taught Christ, (*i. e. the doctrine of Christ*), and their successors taught themselves, (*i. e. their own doctrine, to excite admiration*.) It was not enough to believe the doctrine of christianity, but you must believe it in words of their inventing. To dispute their decrees, though they contradicted common sense and the spirit of God, was heresy; and heresy was damnation. And when, in consequence of this, they had allotted a pious christian to eternal flames, for his infidelity in them, they despatched him thither with all speed; because he was to be damned in the other world, therefore he was to be hanged or burned in this. A terrible gradation of cruelty! to be cursed, burned, and damned! But it was something natural; it began from persecuting priests, and ended in hell, and the devil was the last and highest executioner.

Thus they became prelates of both worlds, and proprietors of the punishments of both. Even where the civil sword was not at their command, their vengeance was as successfully, and in my opinion, more terribly executed without it, by the temporal effect of their excommunication. For the person under it was looked upon as a demon, and one in the power of the devil; and so driven out, like a wild beast, from all the comforts of life, and human society; to perish in a desert, by hunger, or the elements, or beasts of prey. And all this, perhaps, for denying a word or a phrase, which was never known in scripture, though impudently pretended to be fetched from thence.

Such dreadful dominion had they usurped over the bodies and souls of men, and so implacably did they exercise it! And to fill up the measure of their false-

hood and cruelty, they blasphemously pretended to be serving God, when they were acting as if there were none.

Those who have set up for infallibility have found a good excuse, if it were true, for the insupportable tyranny, infinite murders, and wide devastations, which their religion has every where introduced. But those who exact a blind obedience to decrees, which they own to be human, and annex penalties to positions, which we know to be false, and they know to be disputable; and, in fine, act and dictate as if they were infallible, without pretending to be so; are so utterly without all excuse, that I know no language which affords a name proper for their behaviour.

The Mahometan imposture was professedly to be spread by the sword. It had nothing else but that and libertinism to recommend it. But to propagate the christian religion by terror or arms is to deny it. It owns no such spirit. It rendered itself amiable, and gained ground by a principle of peace and love. These were the means instituted by Christ, for the recommendation and defence of his gospel; and they, who would choose contrary ones, charge him with folly, and have ends to serve very different from his. Ambition, pride, and revenge, may make good use of violence and persecution; but they are the bane of christianity, which always sinks when persecution rises. The vilest and most profligate men are ever the promoters of it; and the most virtuous are the greatest sufferers by it. Libertines stick at nothing; but they who have the fear of God, cannot comply with all things.

Persecution is therefore the war of craft against conscience, and of impiety against truth. Reason, religion, and liberty, are its great foes; but ignorance, tyranny, and atheism, its great seconds and support. We ought then constantly to oppose all claims of dominion in the clergy; for they naturally end in cruelty. I believe it will be hard to shew, that ever the priesthood, at any time, or in any place, enjoyed the power of persecution without making use of it.

MARRIED,

On Sunday evening last, Mr. William Mitchell, to Miss Lydia P. Brickly, both of this town.

DIED,

In this town, 2d inst. Riley D. Barney, son of Lyman Barney, aged 10 months and 10 days.

On Saturday morning last, Mrs. Rebecca Cady Willard, wife of Mr. Hezekiah Willard, in the 32d year of her age.

On Sunday last, Mrs. Elizabeth Pomeroy, wife of Mr. Gaius Pomeroy, aged 62.

On Wednesday morning last, Mr. Benjamin Gage, in the 74th year of his age.

In Pawtucket, 28th ult. Abby S. Wait, in the 5th year of her age.

BALFOUR'S INQUIRY.

A few copies of a work entitled "An Inquiry into the scriptural import of the words, SHEOL, HADES, TARTARUS and GEHENNA; all rendered HELL, in the common English version" of the Bible; are just received, and for sale by the Subscriber. As but a few copies are received, those who have inquired for this valuable work, are desired to call immediately.

SAMUEL W. WHEELER.